

Story 1363 (1988 Tape 10)

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The Marriage of Âşık Garip<sup>1</sup>

There was once a young man who was known as Âşık Garip. He had fallen in love with a girl for whom he cared more than he did anything else, even his own life. But because Âşık Garip was poor, the girl's parents would not consent to his marrying their daughter. Âşık Garip was so discouraged by this that he decided to go to a distant city to work for a while. Before he left his home, he looked at his saz<sup>2</sup> hanging on the wall and said to his mother, "Mother, do not allow anyone to play upon my saz during my absence. When I come back, I shall play upon my saz, and from the music I play you will know that it is I." He said that because his mother was blind.

Âşık Garip worked for several years in another city until one day he felt that he must return home. When he arrived in his own village, he discovered that the girl he loved was

<sup>1</sup>The word âşık means lover or lover poet. An âşık is more than a lover poet in most instances, for he is also a minstrel who sings his poems. Garip was a legendary âşık whose exploits are celebrated in folktales and songs.

<sup>2</sup>A three-stringed instrument used by folk singers in Turkey, whether or not they are âşiks.

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being forced to marry someone else, and the wedding celebration already in progress. Going at once to his own house, he took his saz down from the wall. But his mother, who heard what he was doing, said, "Oh, stranger, do not take that saz! It belongs to my son, who went to a distant city to work. Now they are marrying the girl he loved to someone else, and the wedding festivities are going on right now."

Striking a few notes on his saz, he said, "Mother, I am Garip, and I shall attend the wedding celebration as a visiting âşık." Taking his saz, Garip then went to the "village room."<sup>3</sup> People there said, "Oh, an âşık has come to our village," and they gathered around Garip to hear him sing and play.

The boy sang a few songs there in the village room. At the end of every quatrain, he sang, "I am Garip, Garip, Garip!"

Meanwhile, the girl whom he loved was waiting anxiously

Garip's return before the wedding ceremony was concluded and she was led to the nuptial chamber. She had prepared two goblets for that night, one of which was filled with poi-

<sup>3</sup> However many hundred rooms there may be in a village, the room, or the village room (oda in Turkish), serves as the muhtar's (head man's) office, as the chamber where he meets with the village council, and often, at night, as the village "guest house," where one or more visitors may be bunked.

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son and the other with wine. If Garip arrived in time to save her from a marriage she did not want, she would drink the wine. On the other hand, if he did not arrive in time, she would drink the goblet of poison.

One day as Âşık Garip was drinking water from the village fountain, he saw coming there to fill her pitcher a beautiful girl all dressed in black. "Why are you wearing black?" he asked the girl.

"Who but I should be wearing black? The girl my brother loves is being forced to marry someone else, and my brother is not here. That is why I am wearing black."

Âşık Garip did not reveal to the girl that he was her brother. He simply said, "I am an âşık and I have played and sung several times at the village room." He then returned home and sang some songs for his mother until a messenger arrived and said he was wanted at the wedding celebration. Someone had said to his beloved, "An âşık has arrived in our village."

I should like to hear him perform," his beloved had said. It was then that they had sent for Garip.

At that point in the wedding festivities, the beloved of Garip sat holding the goblet of poison in one hand and the

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goblet of wine in the other. Just as soon as she heard him begin to sing, she knew that the âşık could be none other than Garip. Throwing down the poison, she drank the goblet of wine and declared that she would wed no one but Âşık Garip.

At first her announcement created great confusion. When the two families met to discuss what was to be done, they reached a decision that was acceptable to everyone. Garip was to marry his beloved, and Garip's sister was to be married to the man who had been engaged to Garip's beloved